

# A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO **PUTTING ON SHOWS**

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by **Jen Angel**

with illustrations by **Kael Goodman**  
and **Jullan Dangerfox**

Olympia



ZINE  
BEGINNERS-G  
1994



I used to think that putting on shows was some lofty thing that I could aspire to but never quite get a chance to do. I used to think it was hard to do a show and there were all these mysterious complicated things that I didn't know about that would make sure I never could put on one successfully. Boy was I wrong. It took a lot of trial and error and a lot of canceled and failed shows to get to some that worked, but hopefully me telling you how I did it can help you do it too (because we all know that shows are as yet the basis of punk rock and everything happens in and around them). Remember though, this is the way that I do it, not the way everyone does it or the way it should be done. It's just my way. With some input from my friends of course. And remember, YOU are the only person who can stop yourself from doing something. There is no such thing as "Well, we can't do shows in my town...." because there's always a way around everything. This is everything I know or could find out about doing a small Do It Yourself punk independent show. It is way too much information, but I wanted to make sure that few questions went unanswered.

Keep in mind that this is a VERY basic guide to putting on a show, and can get you through it if you're clueless. This is the kind of stuff I wanted to know back when I'd only been to three shows and didn't even know what a PA was, let alone how to get one. This will tell you how to do ONE show so that you get some experience and know what you need to deal with. This WILL NOT tell you how to do every show, and if you intend to put on shows often or at anything more than a basic level (particularly in the sound equipment category), then PLEASE get more information.

If you're going to take this as a step by step guide, please, read the whole guide before you start doing anything, because it will give you a better overview of what to do, and sometimes things aren't in the right sections. And thanks for helping the Do It Yourself ethic stay alive, good luck.

Jen Angel,  
August 1994

Complete copies of this guide in zine format are available from me for two or three 29¢ stamps at: POB 43604 Cleveland, OH 44143 • 216.449.0140 • aa704@po.cwru.edu

Drawings by Julian Dangerfox and Kael Goodman, zine layout by Jen Angel and Pete Menchetti.

I did not write this alone. A lot of people helped along the way by directly contributing information or answering my questions, proofreading, or editing. Many of them helped indirectly by talking to me or just telling me stuff about doing shows, by supporting the things I've done, or by putting on a show that I went to and learned from. So thanks, and keep up the hard work, we need more people like you.

## THANKS:

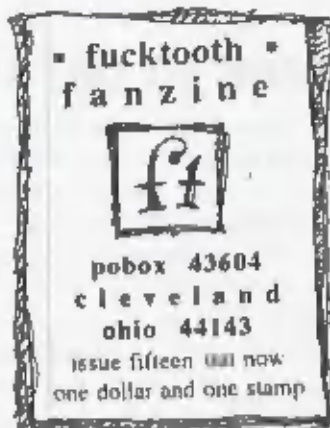
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## WHERE TO GET MORE INFORMATION

Nothing beats going up and asking people how they do what they do. That's the most direct way of finding something out. But, don't go up to someone and say, "How do you put on shows here?" Ask specific questions, or ask them if you can help with the next show.

If you do have more questions, you can always write to me, because I know I must have forgotten something. You can also write to Positive Force DC and ask for their booklet on how to do benefits and other information on DIY things (including something about putting out records) that is called YOU CAN DO IT. It is less specific but you may find it interesting. I don't know if they still have it, but you can write to them at PF/DC: 3510 N 8th St, Arlington, VA 22201.

Here are some other addresses for people who put on shows, and if you live in their city or are interested in how someone besides me puts on a show, don't be nervous about contacting them or asking questions:

Art Fridrich • 777 Xenia Rd #5, Yellow Springs, OH 45387 • 513.767.PLAY

Arawak City Autonomous Collective • POB 10178 Columbus OH 43201

Jamie Rejkt • POB 1982, Roanoke VA 24008 • 703.890.4153

Chris • Brilliancy Prize Productions • 1732 Coventry Rd #6, Cleveland Heights OH 44118 • 216.932.3922

Lee Pugsley • 2868 Westmoor, Rocky River OH 44116 • 216.333.1203

Nathan Peterson • 6607 Sunset Blvd, LA, CA 90028

Nate Tassler • POB 1708 Providence, RI 02912 • 401.863.6747

Pete Menchetti • 516 Ryland St, Reno NV 89507 • 702.324.3889

Steve Wade • POB 3400, Columbus, OH 43210

Also, Shawn Scallen is a DIY promoter in Ottawa, and also compiles a list of other promoters across Canada and the US. You can reach him at: 235 Plymouth St, Ottawa, ON K1S 3E4 CANADA • 613.234.PUNX • an914@Freenet.Carleton.CA.

## WHAT DO YOU DO FIRST?

The first thing that you will need is help. Yes, it is possible to do shows by yourself, but it's never as much fun, and it's always more work and frustration for you. So get all your friends to help, and delegate responsibility. This means getting people to make phone calls, set up, run the sound system, help out the day of the show, and in general, you just need someone to share the experience with you. Two heads are better than one, I've found that out.

Once you decide you want to do a show it's really hard to know what to do first. You can't pick bands because you don't know what day, and you can't confirm a day with the place until you know if bands can play, and if bands can't play you want to change the day, and how can you get bands if you don't have a day, but what if you can't get a place that day?

The first thing I do is pick a day. It's best not to pick a specific day, but a weekend or a general window in which you want to get things done. If this is your first show, make it at least two months away, that way you won't be running around doing stuff at the last moment and freaking out. Shows can be set up quickly, but this way you can take your time.

So you pick a weekend, but it's okay with you if it happens the next weekend too. You now have four dates to work with, since it's best to work with a Friday or Saturday. Sunday afternoons are good too, and you can keep them in mind if you can't get a Saturday or a Friday. The first thing you should do, once you've narrowed this down, is to figure out anything else that is going on in your area on or near those days. Common sense tells you not to pick the day of another show that most of your audience is going to be at. Don't pick a day that a lot of other stuff is going on, even if you think it's unrelated. Holidays, as a rule, should be avoided. Now, this isn't always the case, but if a lot of your crowd is high school aged (like in Cleveland), that will thin the audience out, and you don't really want to worry about that for your first show.

On the other hand, if there is something big going on in your area, you may be able to capitalize on it. If there's a big punk convention during the day (or something like an animal rights convention where there are bound to be weirdos, or an art convention or something) and nothing for that night, plan a show for that night and give all the freaks something to do.

Planning your show on a day near other shows is okay. It can be good or it can be bad. Some people don't mind going to a lot of shows in a weekend, but at the same time, some people get sick of shows after the fourth one in three days. Just use your best judgment.

## HOW TO FIND A PLACE

Once you have a general idea of the day you'd like, the next step I recommend is getting a place. It's pointless to get bands if you don't have anywhere for them to play. This will also be your hardest task, so you better start early.

## **What you need to look for in a room:**

Capacity and room characteristics.

The room can fit anywhere from 50 - 400 people. If you pick a small room, you have to make sure that whoever owns the room (whomever you rent it from) doesn't care about going over the capacity (in the unlikely event that a lot of people show up). You may have a preference for a small or big room, but don't get your heart set on anything, because you probably won't have much of a choice. If by some weird chance you do, keep in mind that big rooms look empty with 70 people in them, but small rooms get hot and suffocating really fast. You don't need a big stage, but if you have one, that's cool too. You probably need a couple tables and chairs for bands and zine writers to sell their stuff, but that's all for furniture. You need to make sure that there are a couple of electrical outlets where the band will be playing, and try to set up the band in a corner or along a wall, somewhere away from the door. That helps get rid of some of the congestion around the stage area. A stage, risers, or a platform are nice, but not essential. If you're planning the show in the summer (or any time really), try to get a room that has a lot of windows or good ventilation (you'll thank yourself later), and don't forget to make sure there are accessible bathrooms. Oh, and keep in mind that rooms upstairs or downstairs without an elevator of some sort will be hard for the band to get their equipment into. Yeah, I love carrying speakers up three flights of stairs. But don't worry, if there is no other choice, it can be done, it'll just be a little more work. Remember, there is always a way around everything.

Cost.

This is hard. You may not make a lot of money, so you want to try and keep the overall cost as low as possible (of course). A reasonable amount to pay for a room rental is up to \$150 for the night. \$150 is kind of high, but if you're desperate, you can live with it. I would NOT recommend paying over \$200 for the room, unless all the bands say that they will play for free and you expect a large crowd. You can pay whatever you want, but you risk not breaking even. Also keep in mind that you usually have to pay this in advance (I'll talk more about money later).

What to ask people.

There are some general questions that you will need to ask everyone. Here are some starters (and feel free to think of your own). Keep these in mind for each place you call or visit, write them down or bring a copy with you so you don't forget anything. And just remember to be forward, aggressive, and confident. No one can tell how old you are, how little you know, or how freaky you look over the phone.

What rooms do you have available?

What is the capacity?

Can we have bands play there as a social function?

How much does it cost to rent? Is there a separate student group rate? Do I have to have approval from someone to have bands play?

How far in advance do I have to reserve the room?

What kind of security (if any) do you require? (which you may want to wait for them

Get your friends to help. Yeah, you can do a lot of it by yourself but it's more nerve racking and not as much fun. Give them incentive and tell them they can get in free, or give them a meal.

If there people doing shows in your city, don't step on their territory. If you know there's a group of kids who put on shows at Apollo's, go to them before you go to Apollo's to set up a show. Some club owners get annoyed when they are hassled by a lot of people, and the kids may be able to either do it easier or help you out. This may not be possible (you don't get along with them), but it's good to try it out first and try not to create negative feelings where you live.

So you did one show and decided it was fun. Now you want to do another, or maybe many others. Here are some other things you should consider.

- getting more people involved
- lowering the door price
- establishing a regular way to find out about shows, a phone number or a dependable listing
- getting even smaller bands. Or establishing yourself and getting bigger bands.
- sell stuff. Ear plugs are 15¢ each when you buy 200 of them. Pop (soda), chips, cookies, whatever.

Well, you get the idea. It's important though, to learn from your mistakes. Get everyone who worked on the last one to get together and talk about what worked, what went wrong, and what you can and should do differently.



new bands so you know who to bring to your town next time. I'm also very in favor of giving all the money to the bands (you are giving something back to them), so if you don't want to keep it, either split it up evenly or get a member of each of the bands together and tell them how much you made, and ask them how much they want. Usually they'll be pretty cool about it.

## WHAT TO DO DIFFERENTLY IF YOU'RE DOING A BENEFIT

Benefits are good because they raise money for a good cause and you get to have fun in the mean time. There are a few tiny things that this changes though. After you decide what organization you want to support, after you have contacted them if they are not a group you are an integral part of (assuming you are doing this out of the kindness of your heart for an AIDS organization or some such thing), you basically go about it the same way as a normal show.

On one hand, it may be easier (or even more difficult) to get bands, and to get them to play for free. When you approach them, tell them it is a benefit right away, and tell them that you'd like all of the money to go to the organization, despite the fact that you want to support bands. Many bands are willing to give their time and effort to support a cause they believe in, so this is not so hard to do.

The other thing that may be easier is getting a place. Some places will give you a break on cost if it is a benefit (or if a non profit organization is involved), and some will be more likely to work with you. Churches, for example, will be more likely to put up with freaky looking kids if they know that you are supporting the rape crisis center or the local food bank (or even the church's own charity organization). If you tell them it's a benefit for your own record label, well, I don't think that's going to work as well.

The last thing to keep in mind is advertising. Some people (like me) will go see a show that is a benefit regardless of whether I like or have ever heard of the bands, just because I want to support the organization you are supporting. So the key is not to downplay the benefit part of it on your flyers.

Benefits are good because they give the music a reason, and they are a way for different facets of a community to help each other out. Don't rule one out just because you don't want to deal with it, if you can do a show, you can do a benefit.

## OTHER TIPS:

The best way to get your way is to be nice. If you make people like you, they are going to be more willing to work with you and stick their neck out for you — or cut you some slack. Just make an extra effort to accommodate bands and owners and sound people. A lot of good things that happen to me and for me are through "contacts" I've made everywhere. And that usually means that someone remembered that when they worked with me I was nice, and they're willing to do me a favor once in a while.

to bring up)

If they have anything suitable, jump on it! But make sure you see each place before you rent or reserve it, and a big thing: make sure there is enough PARKING. This could be a real problem, so find out where parking is, if it isn't right in front of or next to the space, and make sure you get the word out.

\*\* Something that works really well is stressing that you are trying to provide positive entertainment for YOUTH as opposed to BARS. If you try to have alcohol at shows (unless they're at a club), you are GOING to run into (legal) problems, and it's better not to deal with that for the time being. Kiss up to the people you are trying to rent from and tell them that you're trying to provide a DRUG FREE atmosphere for young'uns. It works.

\*\* Also, be HONEST with the people you are dealing with, and let them know what is going on. There will be more problems for you later if they catch you on the sly.

Here are some suggestions, in my order of preference:

- Colleges: If you, or one of your friends goes to college, this is a good place to start. You will have to decide what channels to go through. The best things to do are check with organizations who have done this in the past (if any have), the "student events committee" or whatever your school's equivalent is, the student government, or the office. The easiest and fastest way to find out what your school policies are may be to go to the general office of the student union (or whatever hall has a big enough room) and ask all those questions up there. Ask: What are your policies regarding.... ?

If the school tells you that you need to be sponsored by a registered student group, don't panic. Go around and ask all your friends or approach sympathetic groups. Remember, usually all the group has to do is sign a paper saying that they sponsor the event. Try animal rights groups, Amnesty International groups, radio groups, atheist groups, entertainment groups, whatever. Tell the group that you'll give them money if you make any (though you probably won't have anything left over, so don't worry about it). Keep in mind that you'll have to wade through bureaucracy knee deep, and it may take a lot of time, but setting up a good relationship with your school can really be worth it.

At Ohio State, the shows were done in a room with a 200 capacity for \$85. We had to have group sponsorship and we used groups like: Active Radio, POET (animal rights), BACCHUS (alcohol education), and some gay groups also (you can always look into starting your own group if you have time). The price range, from my experience, is usually Free — \$100 for students, and the room sizes vary from tiny to HUGE to outdoor. If you're not a student you can try college anyway, though they usually have higher prices and tougher rules for non students.

- Halls and churches: I've personally never put on a show at a hall, but if you can do it, go right ahead. In Indiana they do shows at the Knights of Columbus Hall, and it seems to work out fine. The Cabbage Collective in Philadelphia also used to put on shows in a church basement, and that was good for a while.



Dig out your phone book and look up "Halls and Auditoriums" or "Churches" and start calling. Unitarian churches are usually quite liberal and are a good place to start. Ask all those questions. Halls are good because they are big and have big parking lots, usually, but at the same time the acoustics are bad and the sound won't be that great. A lot of halls will be very expensive (generally over \$200 for a night) or will not be interested in dealing with you. Another tactic is to walk around your area (or the desired area) and just go into churches and high schools and things and ask (hey, what are they going to do, say no?).

- **YMCAs (and YWCAs, day care centers, boy's clubs, youth leagues or other similar places):** A lot of shows happen at YMCA's. You start by calling the place and asking if they have any suitable rooms, but don't ask about bands right away. This is because as soon as someone hears bands, they assume the worst and tell you right away that they don't want to work with you. You need to give them the chance to hear what you are trying to do (promote the DIY ethic and provide a good place for kids to go). If they do have a good room (most Y's have a multi purpose room and a gym), ask for the director's name. Call back later and talk to the director (it helps if you ask by name), or make an appointment to go in and see him or her. They have no problem with renting you the room, but they DO have a problem with letting you charge money, and that's why you need to go to the top. When you do talk to the director, stress how you are trying to provide an alternative to bars, etc, and THEN say you want to have bands play. Stress that there will be no violence or slam dancing (it doesn't matter if there will be or not) or anything of the sort, you know what they want to hear. I have had no success doing this, but a lot of people have, so it's worth a try. You have to watch, some YMCA's have an antiquated NO DANCE rule, but just reassure them that a concert is different than a dance and no one really moves anyway (well, some do, you know how kids will act at shows in your area). If all else fails, rent the room and tell them you're not going to charge money. Just ask for a donation at the door (a MANDATORY donation, that is). That can be risky though. Room rates are usually VERY cheap, something like \$20-\$60 dollars though they can be more expensive, and room sizes vary from 100 person capacity on up. You should have no problems with parking.

- **Coffee Shops, Art Galleries, and other similar places:** I've also seen a lot of shows at galleries and such, though I've never set one up myself. Most of the

people who want announcements about your upcoming shows if you are planning to do any. Other than that, just wait until the show is over.

After the show, make sure you stay around and clean up. Leave the space as clean as when you got there, or cleaner. Help all the bands move out, and make sure you load the sound system into your, or someone's car, and return it to the store on time. Also, make sure you are out of the room by the time your limit is up. That is very important.

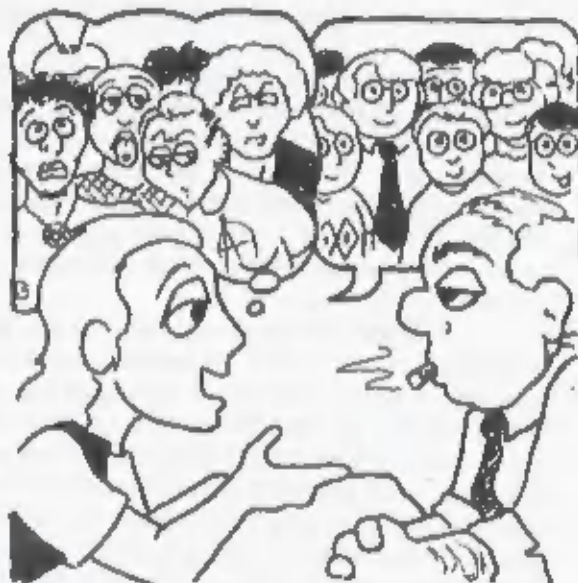
- \*\* Make sure that the friends you ask to help are friends that you can TRUST. Not to say that you don't have nice friends, but you really need dependable help. For instance, you have to make sure that the person at the door doesn't let their friends (or anyone else) in for free, that's why putting a second person there is good — less temptation.

- \*\* Some things you should bring to the show just in case you need them: a flashlight, extension cords / power strip, blank paper, markers, masking or duct tape, money for change at the door, ear plugs, and jugs of water or at least bring cups, for the bands and for yourself. And don't forget to eat before the show because you're going to get hungry at a time when you can't leave.

## HOW MUCH TO PAY EVERYONE ONCE IT'S OVER

Remember to try and keep the band cost low for your first show. This means asking local bands to play for free and out of town bands to play for gas money, and ask them how much gas money they will want in advance. On the night of the show, keep all your expenses written down or at least clear in your mind, because when people start asking you for money you don't want to forget anything.

All right. If you make enough money to pay yourself back for expenses, great. Put it aside. Then look at how much is left over. Pay the bands what you promised them. Do you have more left over? If you want, keep it so you can charge less for the next show, or not worry so much about breaking even. Or spend it on yourself. You worked hard (even harder than the bands?) and you deserve it. Money is good, and you can buy 7"s of





get to the place of the show at least an hour before the doors open (which should be half an hour to an hour before the bands play). You can get there earlier if you want to or if you are nervous. Then things that come first are setting up the room (clearing away all the chairs and tables if there are any, making sure to leave a few for people to sit on and a few tables for the bands to sell their stuff), setting up the PA, and welcoming the bands. Welcoming the bands is important, especially if you've never met anyone from the band in person. As each band arrives, make sure you talk to them and see if they have any problems, remind them of what time (approximately) they will be going on, and tell them where to put their stuff (somewhere near the stage / band area that is relatively away from the audience area — you don't want things damaged).

Also, if the room is in a building or hard to get to, make sure you hang signs EVERYWHERE so people won't get lost. Hang a sign at the door saying how much it is and what the band order is. Also put up No Smoking signs if people are supposed to smoke outside, and a sign that tells people where the bathrooms are so the door person isn't answering questions all night. Hang signs for everything, they usually help. Just make sure that they are readable and can be seen from a little distance.

Have the first band's equipment set up on stage and ready by the time the doors open. Also have one or two people at the door — one to take money and one to stamp a person's hand. They will need a table, some money to make change with, something to put the money in, and a hand stamp. The stamp should be something that isn't easily duplicated and isn't symmetrical. A lot of people use stamps that have words on them. You can get them anywhere, like FIRST CLASS stamps at the office store for \$3. You do this because some kids will try to sneak in by licking or wetting someone else's hand stamp and pressing their hand over it (you'll be able to tell if they do this, because the word will read backwards). You also want to avoid using a marker, because that can easily be duplicated. Besides, stamps are cool, and markers are cheap and silly.

Then, start the show on time. If you wait, people will know that you don't start on time and for the next show they'll come even later. Even if there are only five people there, do the show anyway. Sure it's frustrating that no one comes, but there's not much you can do about it. Then hope the show runs well. Make sure each band introduces itself on stage so people know who they're listening to. You can also go introduce yourself and say that you are trying to do cool things and shows and people should talk to you if they want to help, or you can have a mailing list for



shows that I know of were organized by someone who knew the gallery or coffee shop owners personally. That means a good thing to do is think of all of the people you know, or who are friends of friends, or friends of your parents, and see what spaces they have access to. You can also approach galleries and shops on your own, though I don't know how successful you're going to be. I tried to set up a show at a place called Akademia (or something) on the west side of Cleveland but the owner flaked on me. Gallery owners are wary of their space being damaged or getting a bad reputation, while coffee shops are afraid that you'll drive away the quieter intellectual crowd (which does happen if you do shows at a coffee shop too often), so be prepared to discuss issues like these with the owners. Those are the bad things, but places like these have good shows because of the atmosphere and the general "arty-ness" of the place, that makes them worth looking into. The only thing you have to worry about is whether the space has a permit for amplified sound (if your city requires one) or has quiet neighbors that aren't used to this kind of noise. Make sure you check those things out with the owner, or make sure they don't care about not being completely legal and having all the permits. You can also try any other local establishment that has suitable space or basement area. In Kent, they used to do shows at a Pizza shop, so just remember to not rule out a place just because there has never been a show there before. These places usually don't have problems with parking, but just make sure to check it out ahead of time.

\* Outdoor places: These are great because they provide a change from the normal hot, claustrophobically tiny clubs that a lot of bands play in frequently. However, they bring up a lot of problems you don't have to deal with otherwise.

To find outdoor places, call your area colleges and the city parks office. Also check out people's back yards.

The first problem, depending on what the place is like, how close it is located to other noisy things (shopping centers or freeways), the weather, and what kind of PA you have, the sound may be very difficult to hear and to run. I really don't know how to help you with this, except to say ask the opinion of an experienced sound man and take your chances. But you shouldn't worry too much about it because I've seen it go off without a hitch too.

The other problem is how to make it an outdoor show and still charge money. I mean, if people can hear it from far away or if they can see from a place outside of the "controlled" area, how are you going to make them pay to get in? No, you are not a capitalist pig, but you need to cover your costs for sound and security and the space. There are a couple of solutions to this, though I don't know how agreeable they are. First, you have to make the controlled space big enough that the band is hard to hear and not visible from outside of this. That can be accomplished by a fence. At the Dayton More Than Music fest, the place they use, the Brookwood Park Hall, is accessible by only one road and surrounded by trees, and that solves the problem. Another thing you can do is have a number of people walk around in the space and collect money from people and mark their hands or check for wrist bands (which can be the plastic kind or a nice weird yarn color). It's helpful if the people you have walking around are identified as "official" by a t-shirt or something on a string around their neck, so people aren't wary of paying them. You can just ask people for donations, if your expenses are low or if you have a lot of money, and if you trust people will pay out of the goodness of their hearts (yeah!



believe that one too).

These places are usually inexpensive (though not always), and another big concern that you have to deal with is Bathrooms. Now, someone told me you can rent those cheesy port-o-lets for around \$75, and you can probably find out where to get those from the place you are renting the space from or from the phone book. However, I think it is easier just to find a space that either has it's own bathroom facilities or is located near enough to a building that does. You will also have to worry about lighting if you do the show later, so it's best to plan these shows in the afternoon, around 1 pm or so.

Houses: Basements or living rooms are great places to see shows, because they're a lot less formal and tend to be more like parties. It really doesn't matter



how big of a place you have, as long as there's enough room (and electricity) for the band to set up in a corner, and room for 20-30 people to watch (or less, it's up to you). For a PA, all you need is something for the vocalist, but it doesn't have to be anything big, and you should try to borrow something from your friends who are in bands. If you have a big house, and you have a REAL show, then go ahead and get a bigger system. Problems you may have with this are noise with the neighbors and complaints about having people milling around outside your house. Solutions include soundproofing your basement by covering all of the walls and particularly the windows with foam, carpet, or other insulation to cut out sound, it's very effective. Also, just tell people when they come in, to go out and ask them not to stand around outside your house, or if they do, to stay in front of your house and not your neighbors, and to keep the noise down. This is a good tip for any place: if

you can't help but sympathize and tell them not to worry about it. But what do you do?

If you have enough time, call every band you know and see if you can get them to play at the last minute. Just tell them the situation and ask if they can help you out. If you can't find anyone, which may happen with such short notice, there is not much you can do, but there are some things you SHOULD do to avoid making anyone angry with you.

If there are still two or three bands, don't cancel the show. Just charge less at the door, but make sure people know, before they pay, that one of the bands won't be playing. This can be easily accomplished by putting a sign up at the entrance to the space or right next to the door person. Make sure it says who canceled, why (putting something like "because of illness" works), and who is playing in their place, if anyone. You want to say why on the sign so people aren't asking you a million questions about it all night long.

If you're not sure whether to cancel the show or not, call all of the other bands. Tell them the situation, and ask them what they want to do. Take their advice, and in a worse case scenario, cancel the entire show.

Cancelling is hard, because you will invariably lose money. You will probably lose the money you paid for the room, plus the deposit on the PA if there was one, and the money you spent on flyers and such. Considering that you will lose that money, it may be just as worth it to go ahead with the show, because you might make just enough to cover what you put into it, and people might come anyway, particularly if it's not the "headlining" band that canceled.

Once you do decide to cancel, the only things you can do, unless you have more than a week notice, is put a sign on the place's entrance so people know when they get there, and call up the people who told you they were planning on coming. That will save them the trip. That is, as I said, a worst case scenario, and especially if most of your bands are local, it's not very likely that something like this would happen.

## THE DAY OF THE SHOW

The day of the show arrives and you are very nervous. It's very overwhelming and you have flashbacks to the day you started planning it all: what do you do first? You just need to remember to do one thing at a time and everything will run smoothly.

First, you need to have people to help you, and this is probably your friends or anyone you can get who is interested. You need to decide how many people you will need. Keep in mind that you'll probably be busy running around making sure everything is okay, and you won't have time to do just one job, like take money at the door. You will need someone to run sound, one or two people to run the door, and one person to stand by each entrance to the room (besides the front where the money is being taken) to make sure that no one is sneaking in.

What to do.

The first thing you have to do on the day of the show is pick up the PA and



three dollar shows ■ great, they draw a lot of people just because they're cheap and a lot of people don't mind being disappointed if they only spent two ■ three dollars. The bottom line is, keep the door price as low as possible.

If you're worried about breaking even, set it high, make it five dollars. It is not necessarily true that you will get more people, because the people who are going to come will probably come if it's \$5 or if it's \$4. Just remember what you yourself would pay for the show, and keep that in mind.

As a side note, we've also done things like charge \$5 cash or \$4 plus ■ canned food item. This is cool and gives you a bunch of stuff to donate to the local food bank or soup kitchen. It can also remind people that shows aren't just about music.

## WHAT TO DO NEXT

Once you have everything decided, you should do a couple of things. Like call the place back and confirm. Call all of the bands and confirm. Call all of the bands and tell them what their time slot ■ and when they should get there. You don't really have to have sound checks, you just play a little with the levels before their ■■ You should tell the bands to get there and unload their stuff before the doors open, so there's no confusion about a ■■■ being really late. Other than that, you can just sit and worry about how the show is going to go.

### What do you do if ■ band cancels?

When you put on a show without a contract, you run the risk that a band may cancel. I would rather take this risk than work with contracts like the clubs do, because I prefer to trust people's word ■ these things, and most other promoters

(that's what you are) who work on shows this size never bother with them.

However, bands do cancel, and usually at the last possible moment. No matter how good their reasons are, you are still screwed and you will most likely be upset about it. Most bands do have a good reason, like the singer coming down with a case of laryngitis ■ other sickness (not to mention any names, Joe), and



cops see a bunch of kids standing around outside somewhere, whether or not they are freaky looking, the cops are going to be curious. These shows usually do have ■ problem with parking also. One solution is to ask people to park a couple streets away and walk a block to the house. This draws less attention to you. Oh yeah, if you ■ worried about having problems with noise or neighbors, try having the show in the afternoon.

- Clubs: If you have a lot of money, or if you're booking Endpoint in Columbus and you are SURE you're going to make back all the money you spend, you can go to a club. It means working with a shitty promoter and a less than nice club owner (usually), but it may be worth it, especially if you have no other choice. There are some benefits, like having a good sound system already and having an established place that can help you publicize. Bad things are that the door price will probably be higher than you want it to be, you may have to deal with an age requirement, and often clubs will do little things that annoy you, ■ take 20 ■ of all merchandise sales, or a similar percentage of the door money.

For example, last time I checked Peabody's Down Under in Cleveland will give you a Sunday matinee time for \$350. I think that this is for four bands. This includes a bar person, a door person, security, and a sound person, ■ well ■ help with publicity. It's good because you know that your costs (before you pay bands) will be exactly \$350. However, you should call and check on this before you make any plans, because it may have changed. You then get to keep ■ the money you make over that \$350, which is good, but that money ■ probably go to the bands, unless they are playing for free. Stache's, in Columbus, on the other hand, does it a bit differently. What they charge you is \$100 for running the sound system. Then, you set the door price and you keep ■ the money from the door. They then keep all the money from the bar. However, they have to approve bands, and a lot of times will not accept bands that appeal to young or straightedge crowds — because they don't ■ beer. However, you can sometimes get around a club ■ this by doing an early afternoon or matinee show, like on a Sunday.

Most clubs you just have to call and ask. You have to make it clear that you are not calling to book one band but an entire show. If they put on punk shows already, they probably will have no problem with this, though you will have to kiss up to them and work around them. If you happen to have a really cool club run by cool people who ■ into punk, that you've got ■ made, just approach them with a date (or dates) and what bands you ■ interested in.

## ONCE YOU FIND A PLACE

When you finally find ■ place that is willing to let you put on ■ show, there ■ important things you need to find out.

Do they have any of your days available? If they don't, do they have any other suitable days?

How long ■ you have the ■ for? What time do you HAVE to be out?

Will anyone from the place (besides yourself) be present at the show?

Are you responsible for cleaning up the room?

do they have any kind of sound equipment there?

Don't reserve the room yet, just find out what days they have available. Your next job would be to find out what bands can play any of the dates that the place is open, and work from there. There's more on that in the "what bands to get and how to pick them" sections.

## LEGAL STUFF

You can deal with these before or after you find a place, but I'm just going to mention it now and get it out of the way. There are a couple of legal aspects of putting on a show that you just cannot ignore.

The best way to find out the specifics to these things is to just call your city hall (get the general number out of the phone book. If there is a more specific number for you to call they'll tell you) and ask. You can also call the non-emergency police number and ask them (remember it NEVER hurts to ask anyone anything. All they can say is no, and you haven't lost anything by doing that). Here are some things that you need to know:

- **Curfew laws.** Find out the times for all ages. If you think that this is going to be a problem (or that cops will show up), make sure your show is over before the first curfew. Curfew laws have been used by cops to successfully shut down shows in a lot of cities, including Columbus and Dayton. Basically, what it says is that if you are under a certain age you must be off the street unless you have a legitimate reason for being out, such as on your way home or whatever. This is usually used to bust people hanging around on streets. However, a lot of cops do not consider a rock concert a show as legitimate reason to be out.
- **Noise ordinances.** If you're doing a show at a house, make sure you find out what ordinances exist in your city and what exactly they say. This may be helpful for other shows too, and it is one of the primary reasons for smaller shows getting shut down. Ways to avoid this are soundproofing your house/basement, etc, and I'll go over that later.
- **Some cities, like North Olmsted, Ohio, require you to hire an off duty police officer for security.** Yeah, this is a hassle, but it needs to be done. The person you find this out from is a good person to ask about how to get one. Usually, you can just call the non-emergency number of the police department. Rates are commonly \$15-17 an hour. This may not be so bad you think, though, because for six hours it works out to be \$90, and that sum of money may just convince the hall or YMCA that you are okay to work with.
- **Fire Codes.** These codes require you to have enough exits, etc, in the place, and require you to abide by the set capacity. This won't be a problem if you're doing a show in a rented space or at a YMCA or whatever, because they have this already taken care of. You only really need to be aware of this as reason that your show can be shut down.
- **Posting laws.** Some cities have ordinances against posting or flyering. I cover this again in the "how to advertise" section, but just look around and look for

really bad, because the only person who is losing money is yourself, and you won't have bands that are mad at you for not getting what you said you'd give them.

If you don't have the money yourself, which is probably the case because the only reason I have any is that I hoard my money and don't spend it (and I realize everyone else isn't like this), there are a couple things you can do. First, you can beg all your friends and family to loan you money, enough to cover the costs. Then you have to beg everyone you can to put off payment until after the show. Undoubtedly, you will have to pay the sound system before the show and you may have to pay the room fee before the show. You also can try to scam copies and supplies, that should help a little.

You can also do things that I've never done, but look for sponsors. Basically what you do is go to a store that your friends own or at the local cool stores and ask them to give you money. Essentially, you tell them that you will give them advertising for money. You can do things like put their name on your flyers and also announce that they're cool at the show, or allow them to be at the show themselves and talk about their business or organization. But you have to pick a cool company because not many are willing to do this, and you don't want to give your support to or advertise for a business you don't like or don't agree with.

However, I still think the best way to finance a show is to front it with your own money. I realize that a lot of people put all of their money toward things like rent and food and may not have enough (probably around \$200 for sound and the room) available. But by getting sponsors and borrowing money, you can do a lot of other stuff, though most of it involves selling. You have to be creative here, but you can always go back to the old standards, like garage sales. These are great. Get everyone you know to donate stuff and pick a Saturday and a Sunday and do it. You can make cookies and sell them at a show for ten cents each. Or mow lawns in the summer. Or clean out your neighbor's attic. You get the idea.

## HOW MUCH TO CHARGE AT THE DOOR

When setting the door price, there are a lot of things you have to keep in mind. First, think of your expenses, plus how much the bands want to get paid (or you want to pay them). Also, how popular the bands are, the number of people you think will come, and how much they will want to pay. As a rule, at most, don't charge more than the number of bands plus a dollar. That gives money to you and to the bands. Five dollar shows are good. Four dollar shows are better, and





Another tactic, though it has good and bad sides, is handing out flyers. You can do this ■ big hang out places (like coffee houses) or at other shows. Sometimes though, it ■ considered rude (usually by the management) to hand out flyers at another person's show. I disagree with this because if it's another independent show ■ yours, you probably aren't taking business away from them, because you wouldn't schedule ■ show opposite them. But if it's a big club, I really don't ■■ if I take their business. They might, however, get pissed that you are doing this, and have you thrown out. Or they could be ■■ and just ask you to stop. You can solve this by handing things out after the show instead of before. This is true of the Nautica in Cleveland. The downside of ■ this is that ■ lot of people just through flyers like this away, and you're bound to find a lot of them on the ground outside.

• College Radio: This is a really good thing. What you do is you ■■ up all the college radio stations (you ■■ call the request line, and they'll tell you if you have to call a different number), and you can get their numbers by calling the college, looking in the phone book, ■■ calling information. Just ask whomever to list you on their upcoming show list that they read on the air. I've also had some people ask if they can have free tickets for their DJ's in trade for promotion, or ask you if they ■■ do a "free ticket" give a way on one of the shows. The way that works is they'll have a contest ■■ in, and someone will ■■ tickets. Then the radio station will call you and tell you what name to put ■■ the guest list and you let the person in free. It is totally ■■ to you if you want to do that or not. You can also try your local corporate station, especially if they have a local show. They dig punk. Sure.

• Electronic mail: ■ you have any ■■■■■ to email, take full advantage of it, ■■■■ If you have to go through a friend. What you need to do is get the word out on ■■ the local bbs's. You can also start a little mailing list of shows, though you may want to just send a general message to the punk list or straightedge list. This will let any people from your area who are on the lists, or those who are travelling to your area, know about your show. Here ■■ some addresses to send messages to:  
punk list                      punk-list@cs.tut.fi  
straightedge list      sxex@sun.soe.clarkson.edu

available lists:  
Bay area                      the-list-request@violet.berkeley.edu  
Chicago area                  lclayton@uhuru.uchicago.edu  
Atlanta area                  ofross@vader.cc.emory  
and occasionally I do ■ Midwest show list, available from me at:  
aa704@po.cwru.edu

## HOW TO FINANCE THIS WHOLE THING

This is, of course, the tricky part. The way I always do ■ is by fronting the money out of my own pocket and hoping to get ■ back later. This occasionally backfires, but I haven't found another way to do it. I mean, if you have the money to cover expenses ahead of time, it won't really matter if the turnout at the show is

other flyers, ■ just ask other bands or promoters ■ your area.

## WHAT BANDS TO ASK and HOW TO ■■ THEM TO PLAY FOR YOU



Getting bands to play isn't ■ hard as you may think. Well, you're not going to get NOFX or Fugazi ■ the Ramones for your first show (because you probably don't have enough money or a big enough space), but it's not as if you can't get ANY good bands. The first thing you need to do is decide on what bands you do want. If you're friends with a band ■ a band you like is touring, start with them.

Make a list of ■ the bands that you'd like to play on the show. Well, bands that would and could play on the

show. Good things include: they live in the area, you're friends with them, they'll play for little or no money, and THEY'RE POPULAR. That last one is important. What you want is a band that ■■ draw a crowd. Not a big crowd, but a crowd nonetheless. If you keep it small and you pick four local bands that each have an okay following, you'll do fine. Or you could pick one band that has ■ huge following in your area and a couple not so well known bands that you'd like to see. An important thing is that YOU want to see these bands. You're going ■ be putting ■ a lot of work for them, you want to make it worth it. Also, a couple of people have told me that "straightedge" bands have higher guarantees than "punk" bands. This isn't, of course, always the case, and don't let it stop you from calling a band, but don't be surprised by it.

Now you have ■ list of bands you want to play, and it's good if you have ■ few more bands than the number you actually want to play, in case your first choices can't make it. Dilemma. How do you contact them? There ■■ a couple of good ways ■ go about getting their phone number. ■ you have a lot of time and can't find their phone number, try writing them and including your phone and address,

Is their phone number or address on their album cover or liner?

Do you (or does anyone you know) know any of the band members ■■ slightly? Do you know anything about any of the bands? If they're local, knowing where ■ member works, lives, or hangs out can be your best bet. Or find out one of the member's full names and call information. (If you want to find the area code for

city, call the operator and ask. You can then call information for any area by calling 1-(area code)-555-1212, if you're trying to reach a band far away). Call the last place they played and ask for their number. Call record stores. Call college radio stations and DJ's. If they're on a label, ■ the label. Ask other bands and even ■ writers from the area. And perhaps the simplest, go to one of their shows and talk to them in person.

If you can't get their number, give up on them for the time being.

Now you have your list (which may be slightly narrowed), CALL THEM. Make a sheet of paper with every band listed on it, ■ well as the days, so you don't forget. Call the first band. Explain that you're trying to do a show and what the place you have is like. Tell them what other bands you ■ considering. Here is what you ask them all:

First, are they interested in playing?

What ■ ■ they available? (if they're not available, find out if they'd be interested in playing a show later on).

Will they play for free ■ for gas money? (especially if they're local)

Will they play without a guarantee?

(if they won't) What kind of money would they need to play a show for you?

(if they're out of town) Would they need a place to stay?

What other bands do they suggest you call for this show? (they may have someone they'd like ■ play with).

Do they have a preference for their order slot? (first? last? middle?)

\*\* Contrary to popular belief, it is not hard to get bands to play for free, especially if you're nice to them. Just be forward and ask.

\*\* A "guarantee" ■ the amount a band says that they will play for. For instance, when the Offspring toured with Guttermouth, to book them you had to promise that you would pay the bands a total ■ \$1,000. Guarantees range from \$50 on up. It's good to support bands, but at the same time, it's hard to promise money that you don't have yet.

Once you get all of the information down, look at what you have. Do you have four bands that can all play one of your days? ■ you do, great, you're on your way. If you don't, go back to the part about picking bands and start again. Four is ■ great number to shoot for, for a lot of reasons. First, the more bands you have, the more people (usually). This ■ because each band has it's own following. Plus, people are more likely to ■ for one band they DO like and three bands they MIGHT like, instead of just their friend's band and one other that they've never heard of before. Five bands works pretty well, but when you start getting up around six bands, people just get tired and bored by the end and it usually ends up working against you.

You can also tell the bands that you aren't sure how much money you are going to make (because you're not) and that if you DO by some miracle, make ANY

usually have a listing that they won't charge you to be included in. ■ you push hard enough, like calling and asking for the music columnist, you may even get a write up on what you ■ doing.

\* Flyers: The next most important thing than word of mouth. Make up a flyer. It has to have all the details, and it has to be readable. Try to make it eye catching or put a neat picture on it. Try for original art if you ■ and avoid cutting and pasting things from magazines, as these flyers are often messy and not likely to catch someone's eye. Also, a good thing ■ to make flyers a half or quarter page size. Not only does this reduce the amount of paper you use, they are easier to hand out or to send to people. Plus they cost less to copy. Also keep in mind that sometimes flyers aren't noticed because they catch someone's eye, but because there are so many of them — everywhere.

Once you get the flyer made, mail and give away a couple to everyone you know who would possibly go to the show. This is basically a follow up to the phone calls you made and also reaches people whose phone numbers you do not have. Then, take flyers to every record store in town, even if they only have two punk records and ■ in ■ mail.

Put one up in the window, and ask if you can leave a little pile of small ones on the counter. Then, take the rest of the flyers and plaster your town. Good places: hang out streets, streets near colleges, coffee shops, "hip" restaurants, skate parks, anywhere you can think of. MAKE SURE to get all of the colleges and high schools in your area, that is very important. A good thing is to paste (wheat paste is good, just look at the hardware stores) or tape (masking ■ duct tape works) or staple (a regular

stapler opened up works just as well most of the time as a staple gun, though a gun is certainly easier) them on light poles and boxes, walls, fences, etc. A lot of cities, like Seattle, have anti-postering laws, and the best way to find this out is to just look for other flyers, and put yours next to theirs.

A good time to do this is a week or week ■ a half before ■ show. But, go back a week or three days before the show and do it all over again. A lot of times flyers will get covered up (in Columbus, this happens in a matter of days (well, hours)) or thrown out, and often people need ■ reminder. And keep in mind that it ■ ■ little rude to cover up ■ else's flyers if their event hasn't taken place. I mean, you wouldn't want your flyers covered up, would you? Well, if it's some shitty corporate band I wouldn't have a problem, but that's up to you.





case one of the mic volume levels needs to be adjusted (if the singer starts whispering or something and no one can hear him). And remember to bring your own extension cords and power strips just in case.

\*\* The one other thing you may need for setting up band is a relatively small square of carpet, probably no larger than three feet by three feet. You need this to put the drum kit on if you are on a slippery tile or linoleum floor. If you have this (you could probably dumpster something that would work very easily), it prevents scrambling for something right before a band goes on or during the set. It just makes the drummer's job easier, and he may very well have something of the kind with him.

## LIGHTING

You don't have to worry about lighting. If there are no overhead lights where you are setting up the band (which would be very unusual if you are in a hall or YMCA or such place), don't panic. Just ask everyone you know to bring a table lamp and set them on top of the amps or on the floor. There you go, and you don't have to work about renting a light "tree" or anything, and it's free.

## HOW TO ADVERTISE

This is VERY important. I CANNOT over-emphasize the importance of advertising or promoting. What good is a show if no one comes to it? There are a lot of ways to go about advertising, and I suggest you take advantage of as many of them as possible. The best thing to do is to think of where you usually find out about shows yourself, and make sure those sources know all of the details of your show, well in advance. Make sure by the time you start doing these things you have all of the information, like what time the show is, what time the doors open (half hour before the show), how much it will be (which I'll talk about in a minute), what bands, what the order is, what the directions to the place are, and anything else you can think of.

- Word of mouth: This is perhaps the most important tool to promoting a show. Two weeks before the show, call every single person you know and tell them about the show. Or even people who you don't know that well but you think they might be interested. Tell them to go. Ask if they're interested. Give them all the details. Then, a week to three days before the show, call them back. Sure this seems like a lot of time spent sitting in front of the phone, but it is really worth it. Remember, each person also tells their friends, so this is usually very effective.

- Newspapers and other listings: Call every newspaper or listing (like THE LIST in the bay area) and make sure they know. Pick up a copy of each of your town's (and any neighboring town's), free newspapers or "alternative press" papers, and there should be a number or an address for you to call or write to get a listing. You should do this as far in advance as you can because newspapers often have weird deadlines. And remember to try your regular paper too. All of these papers

money after costs, you'll split it evenly among the bands. This is a good thing to do because if they're not expecting to get any (or much) money they'll be presently surprised and very appreciative if they do. Just make them feel guilty and tell them you're trying to support the local scene, and they should too. Seriously, if a band says they'll only play for \$200 and nothing less, they aren't worth your time. They have to keep in mind that you are an independent promoter and not someone out to screw them over. If you make money, they will.

You can also give people incentive like offering them a place to stay or a meal. The place to stay part you only have to worry about if they're from out of town, and if this does come up, remember, don't be afraid to ask your parents if you can have some people stay over. If you have your own apartment, no problem. Also ask every person you know if they could possibly put up some nice people who are coming all this way to play YOUR show (you do, of course, want to find a place for them to stay before you start offering it to them). And for meals, cook up a huge pot of spaghetti and get all your friends to bring one or two plates (or take turns and share plates if you don't have enough). You should be fine, because food works really well, and bands really appreciate it. Remember to find out, if you are planning to do this, whether any of the band members are vegan or vegetarian and try to be accommodating. It's just a nice touch, because it makes someone's life easier. Or you could go ahead and make vegan spaghetti (most tomato sauce recipes and bottled brands are vegan), because then everyone will be happy and you didn't have to ask anyone.

One last thing about choosing the bands: mixing the type of bands can be good, but it can also be terrible. It's good to mix punk and straightedge and hardcore bands together, because their music is usually pretty similar, or similar enough. On the other hand, if you book a hardline band with a big drunk punk band, it's not going to work that well. In the beginning, I would avoid mixing punk and metal. It's good to get two different crowds together, but try to get crowds that don't hate each other.

Choosing the band order:

Find out when all of the bands would like to play. They may not get to play in the order they want, but you can keep it in mind. Basically, it's all up to you, but it is traditional to do things like put the "biggest drawing" band last. Usually bands at a show (I'm sure you've noticed this) start with the unknown band and work up to the one everyone has heard of before. Try and put bands next to each other that you would think would sound good together. Try not to put an unknown band last because no one will show up. Try to put a decent local band first, and the first band doesn't play to five people.

Guest Lists:

For each person that you have on the guest list, you lose money. The best way to go around this is to simply not have one. Yes, each band is going to want their friends to get in free, but just remind them that they lose money too. I recommend stamping or marking each band person's hands when they arrive, and allowing them to bring in one or two people who are with them when they get there,



if they MUST bring in people. Well, if a band brings 10 people with them, you can ask them to pay, but if it's only one or two, don't worry about it. Make sure to tell the bands ahead of time that you have this "policy."

\*\* If a band gives you a lot of trouble, just don't work with them, it's that simple. It's not worth your time.

\*\* Please don't forget that you don't have to just have bands at shows, you can do cool non musical things too, like Spoken Word or other presentations. One show with the Arawak City Autonomous Collective included three bands as well as speakers from the IWW (Industrial Workers of the World), the local Anti Racist Action group, and other speakers on media activism and free schools. We've also had someone from the Lesbian Avengers. Don't be afraid to put this kind of thing in between bands. It makes the pauses when bands are setting up more interesting, and it also gets you out of the typical show rut. You can also contact local scenesters, zine writers, band members, DJ's, and your own friends and ask them if they would like to talk about something, anything. Or pick a topic and ask someone to speak on it. The possibilities are endless, and they really liven up and diversify a show. Well, hopefully.

## HOW TO GET A SOUND SYSTEM

You may not even need to get sound equipment, because the space you use may have some already. Make sure to check that out as soon as you can.

Now, you can hire a sound person or you can run the system yourself. I don't recommend hiring someone because it usually costs at least twice as much as running the system yourself, and it's not really worth it to have a professional do a small show. But if you have a lot of money and you want to do that, it's easy. Just call music stores and ask how much it is to get someone to do sound for you. Also call clubs and ask them. Ask bands if they have someone they can recommend. From my experience, you should expect to pay at least \$200 for this service.

What I do is rent a system (if the place doesn't have one) and try to find someone to run it. The best way to get a sound system, if you can, is to borrow one. Go to all your friends in bands and ask them if you can use their equipment. This is the best way because it's someone you know and you don't have to deal



on output labeled monitor on the back (or top, just look around) of the mixer, with a sliding volume control on the front that is labeled monitor. There is usually an output for left and right sides.

One last note about arranging everything, from Tony Atoms: "The face of PA speakers should always be in front of a line which is in front of the microphones to avoid feedback. (In other words, if the mics were eyes, they shouldn't be able to see the front of the PA cabinet(s) (speakers). Feedback comes from amplified speaker sound making it's way into the mic and forming a loop. If one has monitors, this becomes more of a problem. Then (ideally) the monitor speaker should be facing in exactly the same direction as the mic(s) and as much as possible, centered so that the mic(s) line up directly with the center of the speaker."

Once you have everything plugged in, experiment a little. Oh yeah, make sure the mixer itself is plugged into an electrical outlet. There should also be a master volume control that is two sliding controls right next to each other, for left and right. Turn these up about half way for now, and you can adjust it later. Go and speak into each mic, making sure first that it is turned on if it needs to be, and that the volume control for it's channel is turned up a little. Once you check each mic and play with the levels a bit, listen in front of each speaker and monitor and make sure there is sound coming out of all of them. To set the final levels, you'll have to get a band to play.

Above the volume controls on each channel are these little knob things, right? Well, to tell you the truth I really don't know what they're for. Well, I know what they're for but not what to do with them. I know that they represent high, middle and low ranges of each channel. (Usually they are labeled, to some extent. Bigger boards have additional knobs for effects, and they'll be labeled to that effect). I do know that you can cut feedback by playing with the high or middle range knob on the mic that's doing the feedback. But that's all I know.

You may also end up getting a mixer that looks like a box instead of a board with sliding controls. This is the essentially the same thing, but instead of being set up in front of you on a slanted mostly horizontal surface, the controls will be on a vertical side of the "box." The sliding controls are replaced with knobs that look just like the other ones, and you know they're the volume controls because they're the lowest knob, right above where each cord plugs in. You basically do the same thing, except the cords come out of the front and not the back, and there are round knobs instead of sliding ones. I know there is some other difference, but I couldn't tell you what it is. I've never worked with the box kind, so I couldn't tell you which is better.

The other thing that people talk about is a snake, and I'll tell you about it if you know what people are saying when they mention it. Basically it's a really long thick cable. You plug everything into one end instead of plugging it into the mixer and then you plug the other end of the snake into the mixer. I've never used one, but it basically is helpful if you want the soundboard to be really far away from the bands (like on the other side of the room or in a sound booth or something) because cables aren't that long. But you don't really need it and I'd rather not deal with it. But you can if you want to of course.

That's basically all you need to know about running a soundboard. I mean, after you set it up all you have to do is stand there in case there's feedback or in



you don't really need in mic the drums because they're loud enough, so I won't go over that (as if I could if I wanted to).

Usually, just the vocals need to be amplified, and the guitarist and bassist depend on their amps. If you have extra mics, then you can mic the guitars too (why not?). You accomplish this by taking one of the mics and positioning it right in front of the speaker of their amp — they should be familiar with this and can help you. Oh, the other thing about mics that you need to know is whether to get straight stands or boom stands. If you get a choice, take boom stands. These are stands that bend in the middle, so you can put them in front of an amp as you can bend it over for the drummer to sing into. But you can make due with whatever you get.

After you get all of the mics arranged where you want them, and have cables attached to them, it's time to do the mixer. So you have this mixer here, and it has 6 channels or so. What the mixer does is combine all the amplified sound (the mics) and put it out the speakers. This way you can turn up the vocals if everything is too loud, or whatever. If you only have two mics or four (two for vocals and two for guitars) then you don't need six channels, only two or four, and that's why you don't need a bigger mixer.

Place the mixer on a table near the band, where the person doing sound can see the band members but isn't in the way of the audience. Just somewhere on the side. It's good to have the mixer where the person doing the sound can see the band, and visa versa. Now that you have all the mics positioned where you want them to be, take a cable from each one and run it into the back of the mixer, into a channel. There are spaces marked "input" and "output," you want the input ones. They're either on the back of the mixer, or on top of it, and always in a line. Just remember which mic is in which channel. A lot of people put masking tape under or over the channels on the front of the board and write down which channel is which mic, and that way you won't forget. That comes in very handy.

Once the mics are plugged in, work on the speakers. You should put one on either side of the band facing the audience. You can put them on the floor, on the corners of the stage, or on tables, it's up to you. To plug the speakers into the board, take the cable from the input on the speaker to the output on the mixer. It should be marked left and right sides.

If you have a monitor, there are a few ways of doing it. I'm not quite sure, so bear with me while I fumble along. First of all, a monitor is essentially a speaker that faces backwards so that the band can hear itself while they're playing. This is particularly helpful to the singer. Monitors are usually wedge shaped (the front is slanted), though not always. You can bypass a monitor by putting the speakers behind the band on the sides, though this doesn't always work, because sometimes it's too loud for the band.

Anyway, say you have a monitor. There are two kinds and this is what you do with them.

It has volume control on the unit itself, one way to set it up is to take a cable and put it in the output of one of the speaker and into the input of the monitor. Then you adjust the loudness to the bands preference from the knob on side of the monitor.

If it doesn't have a volume control on it or you have a pretty large mixer that has monitor "out puts," you can still do it the first way if the volume is okay, but it may be too loud or not loud enough. You can also, put the cable in through

with all that renting bull shit.

Renting isn't that bad, it's just money. In Cleveland it's cheaper than in Columbus, for some reason. Prices vary by city, and the difference can be pretty big. If you're renting, you need a major credit card and a drivers license, which isn't hard to come by if you don't have one. Start with your parents, and then next go to your friends. Someone is bound to have one, and remember you're going to be reimbursing them for the full amount. You need to let the store know in advance, at least a week, that you're going to be using their system and make sure they have one available. You usually cannot reserve a PA over the phone, you should go into the store. Also, some stores have more than one location, so you may check with them so you don't have to drive all the way across the city. Some places don't rent microphones, and this is usually for sanitation reasons or just because they're picky.

What you should look into getting for a small show:

When I've done shows in the past, this is what I have used: two mics with stands (boom stands are better but straight stands are fine too) and cables, two main speakers, a small powered mixer (6-8 channels), and a monitor if they give it to you cheap. (I'll explain what that's all for later, and why it works well for this type of show). You don't need more mics unless you know that one of the bands has four singers or ten clarinets, you know, stuff like that. And you don't need to mic the drums because they usually are loud enough by themselves. Here are some phone numbers and general information. If you don't live where I live, just check your phone book. Ask for the equipment I mentioned above. Throughout the whole process just don't be afraid to ask questions. And don't let some sales person tell you what you need, because you don't need two or three monitors, and you don't need a snake (though I'll explain what it is later), and you don't need a lot of other stuff that they'll try and push on you to get your money. And one last thing: cheaper isn't always better. If a band says they need a bigger sound system, remind them that the space is small enough that the drums don't need to be amplified. If they give you a hard time, just tell them it's not worth your while, and you just plain can't do it (this goes back to the "if a band gives you trouble then it's not worth your while to work with them").

As an example, here are what some Cleveland stores will rent, for how much, and under what conditions. This should give you an idea of what the average music store is like. All the ones I've listed here rent the equipment I'm recommending, unless noted otherwise, and all of these are just estimates. Also remember that I've never rented from most of these places, so I can't tell you how big or good anything is.

• Lentine's: 691 2700 - Richmond Heights  
two JBL speakers \$20 ea, two mics and stands \$2 ea, 6 channel powered mixer \$12, any cords are \$1 ea, with \$10 deposit you get back. This place has recently changed their policy though, and they do not let anyone reserve a PA. You just have to go the day of the show or the day before and ask for it, and hope they have it. It's very risky, and I would recommend going to someone else, though they are nice people and they do have nice equipment.



Cleveland Music: 843 9999 - Parma  
probably \$50 bucks for speakers, mics, and mixer. Anything you rent to buy it later, the money you spent before applies to buying it. That's the thing if you are planning on investing in some equipment later on.

- Sodja Music 461 2995 - Richmond Heights  
probably \$45, need a credit card and drivers license. It says on the rental "contract" that you need to be over 21 years old to rent, but I've rented from with no problem, and I don't meet that requirement. The guy I worked with, D., very nice and willing to explain things, I wasn't afraid to ask him any questions. remember to go early on the day that you are picking it up, that way you should get better equipment.

- Central Music: 671 0093 - Lorain Ave  
two fifteen inch speakers, one speaker to be used as a monitor, one eight channel mixer with amps, and two mic stands for \$32 dollars.

Columbus: Here are the places I've rented from before, but there may be more, just check the phone book. This shows you the differences you can encounter between cities.

- Coyle Music: Graceland (ask for Colin)  
They'll rent you pretty good equipment: two main speakers, one monitor, mic stands, and an eight channel mixer for \$100 dollars (\$105 something with tax). They do not rent microphones. But if you can get them somewhere else, I would recommend this place for better equipment and more professional attitudes. Ways to get mics include borrowing them from your friends or asking local bands to bring them, just ask them ahead of time, and you should have no problem.

- The String Shoppe: High Street  
Good location. This equipment is not as good, but it is a little cheaper and they DO rent mics, so if you're worried about having mics, go here. They DO NOT rent mics separately. The cost for everything I've mentioned besides a monitor is \$84.60. You'll have to pay around \$16 as a deposit when you reserve the system.

## HOW TO RUN THIS PA SOUND SYSTEM THING

This part may get a bit complicated because I'm really not sure what I'm doing. The best thing you can do is make friends with someone (Hi Walter!) who knows how to do this stuff, and let them take it over. Or you can do what I do, and get the PA and then hope that someone who knows how to run it comes to the show or is with one of the bands. Make sure to remember to ask the bands AHEAD OF TIME about how much sound equipment they have and how much they know about running it. Oh yeah, it works best when you do this with another person and not by yourself.

First of all, it's best to familiarize yourself with at least some of the equipment ahead of time. If you have friends who have PA's, you're all set. If you don't, it's no problem. You can go to a big music store like Coyle or Lentine's, and

they usually have a section, area, or room devoted to sound equipment. Take with you a list of what you want to look at, and what the name of everything is, and go explore. Just look at everything. If some salesperson comes up to you, don't be afraid to ask them questions. Good ones are "I'm interested in looking at the speakers (mics, monitors, speakers) you have," and they can help point stuff out to you. This way you can see what it all looks like ahead of time.



Now I'm going to go over the basic equipment, and tell you what it is, what it does, what you use it for, and why you need it. Forgive me if I don't know a lot about speakers and stuff. I usually just take what the guy at the store gives me (if he asks you what kind of speakers you want, just tell him what you're going to be using them for, and he can recommend something. If he's nice) which probably really isn't a good thing, but I don't have time to figure this out. What I DO know is that 250 watt speakers are big, probably too big, and 100 watt speakers are a little too small, so shoot for something in the middle.

The first thing is mics. What you need is two for vocals, because most bands have a singer and a back up singer, but you should check with the bands and see if they have more or if the drummer sings. In a small place, or for a small